

## PRISON REFORM

Liquor and Laziness the Twin Causes of Crime.

## WHISKEY IN THE PRISON

As Easy to Obtain as in a Dry Town on a Physician's Prescription—Some Experiences as an Inhabitant—How Warden James Placed Guards to Watch Officials and How It Resulted—According to the Monthly Report of Per Capita Consumption, Each Prisoner Eat Fifteen Pounds of Meat Daily!

## PART II.

## THIRTY-FIFTH PAPER.

It would be a reflection on my manhood did I cease for one moment, during my eight years incarceration, from devising means and originating plans for my release from an unjust sentence. Liberty was my constant thought by day and in my dreams I was always free, for strange to state I never located persons or places within, but always without the walls in these dreams. Thus I always longed for night and sleep that I might be free and in the society of those I loved. In my waking hours I found men inhuman, base and cowardly and women heartless and disloyal, in dreams these men were brave, honest and loyal, the women fond and loving. Hence I loved the night and the repose earned by the sufferings and tortures of mind and body endured during the waking hours and working hours of the prison. To the fact that since my earliest youth I have been a heavy sleeper is due the preservation of my health and mentality. I have never awakened in the night, as long as I can remember, and the hour of rising has always found me refreshed and alert for the day's duties. In prison or out of it I have never played sluggard or found either difficulty or hardship in arising at the usual hour in the morning. Thus I was enabled to defeat the aim of those who, knowing only my personality in the daily affairs of life, plumed themselves with the conviction that I must either go insane or commit suicide to escape the intolerable agony of spirit and the degrading physical routine of the life I was compelled to lead as a prisoner. I was in the prime of manhood when I entered the penitentiary, being in my forty-fourth year and weighing over two hundred pounds. I did not know the taste of liquor until all my children had been born and even then I was but a moderate table drinker, never having drunk a glass of any kind of beverage in a saloon or at a public bar. And while on this subject I may as well state that I am and shall remain a total abstainer to the end of my life.

LIQUOR and LAZINESS are the two most potent factors in the manufacture of the criminal, and money alone saves those who are both from the penitentiary. All who love liquor to excess and prefer idleness to labor, if without means, invariably land in the penitentiary, the exceptions who escape find their way to the insane asylum and the poor house. The records of the jails and penitentiaries, not alone of America, but Europe, will bear out the broad assertion. It is not the purpose in these papers to lecture on the evils of the drink habit and its equally demoralizing and degrading fellow—laziness or idleness. But I am compelled to state ALL of the professional class of prisoners and ninety per cent of the accidental class can trace to one or both of these causes their downfall and their imprisonment. It is true that in my case and in those of many others with whom I have associated in prison, neither liquor nor idleness were the impelling motives of the crimes they were expiating, but I again reiterate we were the exceptions, which could be counted on the fingers of the hand. Hence I would earnestly urge upon the pardoning powers the necessity of making the release of every convict conditional on his total abstinence from liquor. It is simply placing a premium on the commission of crime to restore to liberty a man addicted to liquor. I have never known a drinking man released from the Ohio penitentiary who did not return to that institution, provided he had not left the state and was incarcerated in some other state prison. Numbers of the latter I heard from while a prisoner, and they were invariably "doing time" in Joliet, Moundsville, or some similar institution.

Idleness begets all other appetites and passions. The idle man, rich or poor, but especially the latter, is the unresisting slave of every degrading passion the human being is subject to or capable of acquiring. Hence to be idle means to the youth, consciously or unconsciously the sure road to the acquisition of the other vices which will ultimately land him in prison. I would feel safer for my children's welfare to see them unlettered and even ignorant with a disposition to toil and industry rather than see them disposed to idleness and trifling with the diplomas of Yale or Harvard in their pockets. In the former category they will become useful citizens, in the latter they will find their level either in the penitentiary, the insane asylum or the gutter and the poorhouse.

These deductions are arrived at from an eight years study and heart to heart talks with tens of thousands of the inmates of a penitentiary. The millions who drink and the millions who loaf and who neither see the inside of a prison, an asylum or a poor house are the men of means whose social ties, duties and environments save those who drink from becoming drunkards and those who loaf from becoming tramps. Let the barriers which protect them be thrown down, however, by either reverse of fortune or other cause and they, too, numerically great as they would crowd the prisons, asylums and poor houses, as many examples among them who have, alas! fallen bears witness.

Therefore I, who have neither ax to grind nor plate collection to make, would admonish both the guardians of the criminals and the criminals themselves, that for the preservation of society and the diminution of crime, no drunkard and no shiftless, idle human being should be given liberty, if a prisoner, and should be restrained, if at liberty, until the evidences of reformation in both the one and the other of these two crime breeding vices were apparent and assured.

All this, of course, is preliminary to the chapter I would write on the consumption of liquor in prison and the means and the methods of its procurement. For liquor is procured in prison despite of any and all

precautions taken by the authorities or management of the institution. In the Ohio penitentiary I drank more liquor than I drank in all my life before or since! Why I drank it is a sociological problem—it would take up too much space at present to solve. Further along I may probably offer some analytical reasons for an indulgence so unusual and so extraordinary.

At present I am only concerned in pointing out the danger and the fact that liquor finds its way into ALL penitentiaries and that it is drunk to such excess it is no unusual thing for guards to report prisoners for being intoxicated! In the first place the medical adjunct of the prison finds it necessary to keep a barrel of liquor on tap for medicinal purposes. A considerable quantity of this filters out somehow or other among select prisoners. Of course it is necessary to supply the medical department with alcohol and whiskey, but it would be more prudent and safer to purchase the same by the gallon rather than the barrel, even if it would be a few cents, more or less, dearer. However, the least portion, I might state the infinitesimal portion, of the liquor consumed in prisons in this country come from the medical department of the prison.

The liquor consumed in the penitentiary finds its way into prison in the pockets of visitors, relatives, drivers of teams, citizen employees and—guards! My relatives, knowing my temperate habits when at liberty, never dreamed that I needed liquor or drank any in prison, and while I did not drink very much it is true, I again repeat that I found no difficulty in securing all I wanted and that I drank more while a prisoner than I ever did at liberty!

This, I am fully aware, is a revelation neither the prison authorities nor the prisoners will thank me for. But I will soften the dose by stating that if there is any place on earth where whiskey ought to be drunk in moderate quantities it is in a penitentiary! And if there is any man on earth who needs the stimulation of a glass of whiskey it is the unfortunate wretch undergoing penal servitude. This may seem inconsistent with my remarks on "liquor and laziness," but the intelligent will understand that I do not advocate the drinking of intoxicants when I name the place and the individual where it is most excusable to indulge in the vice.

Under the regime of Warden Dyer, who, it will be remembered, was warden of the penitentiary when I was first immured behind the walls of the Ohio prison, whiskey could be purchased more easily within the inclosure of the prison than it can be procured by a stranger in Washington on Sundays.

There was a colored attaché of the hospital who went by the sobriquet of "Diamond" from whom I purchased liquor as openly, to all intents and purposes, as the chap with a prescription in a dry town at the family drug store. This Diamond was a privileged character, and the impunity with which he peddled the liquor left no room to doubt the assertions of the veteran prisoners that the profits were distributed among certain of the officials.

Now I did not want the liquor, but I was known to have a little money and it was forced on me, so to speak. Besides, it did contribute a little to lull my indignation and soothe a perhaps too turbulent spirit, in addition to stimulating a heart which, despite of spirit and a fair amount of nerve, stood badly sometimes in need of repairs. Hence I became a customer of Mr. Diamond for the first few months of my incarceration and paid him the prison price of \$2 per pint bottle! Becoming quite confidential with Diamond, he informed me that his supplies came from the hospital barrel, to which he had access. When the barrel got too low, however, he kept his customers in liquor by a supply from the outside, brought in, as he stated, by both the prisoner and citizen drivers of teams. This was all very interesting information to a new prisoner and a newspaper man who thought he knew all about the penitentiary when running a live newspaper on the outside.

Liquor, during the Dyer administration, was drunk by both officials and prisoners as regularly (providing the latter had the money) as it was by bibulous toppers outside the walls.

The little room, called the surgery, off the main ward of the hospital, was a veritable bar room and I frequently, on the invitation of one or the other of the officials or physicians, climbed the stairs to the hospital and "took something."

Indeed, it was no infrequent occurrence for myself and other prisoners to encounter an official on the stairs either going or returning from the surgery for his liquor and pass the compliments of the season with such, he knowing precisely the object of the prisoners visit. Of course, these were special prisoners like myself, but Diamond played no favorites and anybody with money could purchase his "pint bottles."

I remember more than one "pink tea" party after the prisoners were locked up which I had the honor to attend in the surgery. Ben Dyer himself attended these jamborees not infrequently, but if I was of the party he would decline to "come in" and walk off with a quart bottle to his apartments!

This went on until in one month there were consumed by the medical department three barrels of whiskey! Then a halt was called temporarily and Diamond raised the price as the article became scarcer. Now it will be very readily believed, I hope, that the relaxation and the change from the solitude of the cell to the light, the society and the enjoyment or the sociability of the gentlemen in the surgery inspired my acceptance of invitations to be present. These invitations, it can also be easily surmised, were limited to prisoners and only embraced a few others and myself. But the obtaining of liquor by prisoners was neither limited nor confined to any class of prisoners. Diamond even adroitly visited the cell blocks on some pretended mission, with pills or medicine from the doctor, and thus was able to sell and slip in his liquor through the bars.

In a modified manner the liquor industry was conducted under Dyer's successor Warden James, with the distinction, however, that there was no Diamond peddling it around the prison, and the main consumers of the "free" liquor were James, Stackhouse, Harry Minor (Board of Pardons), Bill Bond (Dispatch reporter), Varney, the Vitrol feed, and a few other choice spirits including Manager Julius Whiting on his monthly visits. Under James, liquor came freely into the prison by every conceivable route and I believe more prisoners were reported for intoxication under his administration than under that of his predecessor. Personally I had ceased to indulge in the limited allowance I imbibed under Dyer's administration which ran about nine months after my incarceration. During the early winter when details of prisoners were sent outside the prison walls to cut ice in the river an allowance of whiskey was given each man by orders of the warden on the suggestion,

no doubt, of the prison physician, Dr. W. T. Rowles. This liquor was dealt out to each man in a graduate, and the liquor was kept under lock and key in the office of the kitchen. I had charge of the liquor and the key, but induced the kitchen guard to deal out the whiskey from his guard stand as the men came in dripping wet and cold from their work on the frozen river to their light supper. The men in the kitchen, of course, knew that the superintendent had placed the liquor in my charge, and after his departure in the evening from the prison I was besieged by demands, entreaties, bribes, etc., from these thirsty and longing souls for a little of the life-saving fluid, to all of which, I turned a deaf ear. I was the first prisoner in the kitchen in the morning, 4 a. m., and the last one at night, 7 p. m.

The guard did not go on duty until 7 a. m., and departed at 6 p. m. so that in the morning there were three hours of a hiatus without the oppressive presence of the stinky heater and one hour in the evening.

Now a few of the prisoners who were to be at the kitchen at 4:30 a. m., failing to soften, cajole or bribe me into giving them any of the liquor, reported to James that I drank the whiskey in the early morning. Of this, of course, I was unaware and marveled much that James visited me several mornings almost as soon as I reached the office. Finally he came one morning beautifully drunk, if such an adjective is permissible, and then in his maudlin affectionate manner, when under the influence, let the cat out of the bag and informed me why he had called so early, hoping to catch me. He also stated that it was reported to him that the coffee and sugar, lemons, etc., were being sold by some one in the kitchen to the prisoners and that I was suspected. But he knew me and would not believe that I could descend to petty theft of the kind.

"Now Bill," continued this type of prison warden, "I know yourself and family. I will do anything you ask me for your children for I love them. I know you don't drink liquor and I know you wouldn't steal, but you are the bookkeeper of this department and there are thousands of dollars being stolen by the steward and superintendent. You know this because you keep the books, but I can't detect it; you are too smart for me and you have the books fixed all right. I know that in the weights of beef and other meats and in the vegetables sold by Elmer Miller (at present U. S. Collector of Columbus) there is a big rake off, and if you will cough up and tell me what you know I will secure you a pardon from the Major (the late President, then Governor) or you can show me in the books how the trick is turned. If you won't do it I will put a guard down here to weigh everything and keep a note of all that comes in. These fellows are making \$10,000 a year, while I, as warden, have only my bare salary of \$1,800 and quarters, and by G—, Bill, I'll not stand it."

He said much more and talked for over an hour, while all I could do was to gaze at him mentally as helpless from anger and amazement as he was from his night's debauch and red liquor. When my friend, the honest old Dutchman, Munshower, showed up at 7 a. m. I broke the warden's astounding story to him, and had all I could do to prevent his seeking out James and thrashing that semi-crazed drunkard. I advised that he pass it over unnoticed and await developments. If the worst came to pass he could see the governor and explain matters. As for the whiskey, I induced him to remove it from the office and place it in charge of Guard Hester (where the men subsequently got at it and emptied a two gallon demijohn), thus relieving us both of suspicion. As to the selling of the coffee, sugar, etc., we knew it was going on, but had failed so far to trap the thief. When we finally caught him in a trap set for the slick individual, he turned out to be the warden's informant, a second term named Healy. James with his usual eccentricity had him removed to the front office of the prison and detailed as his special runner, and he ultimately secured his pardon!

Time went on and we heard nothing from James for the week or two he kept sober. Suddenly one morning while I was taking the weight of the meat on the scales, a guard appeared, escorted by Julius Whiting, the manager, and Warden James. In my presence the guard was instructed to weigh everything coming to the subsistence department and make duplicate slips, giving one to the superintendent (Munshower) and the other to the warden or his private secretary, at the front office. After the departure of Whiting and James I learned that another guard had been detailed to the steward's office to perform the same duty there! Thus the steward and superintendent, bonded officials of the prison, had guards set over them to see that they did not steal!

I pass over the indignation of the steward and the superintendent (honest Munshower) and pass on to the result. The guards at either end of the line made a delightful mess and mix up of the weighing. For instance, in returning the weight of the meat, etc., they omitted the little fact of deducting the weight of the wagon, and, under instructions from the superintendent, I entered on the ledger the weight returned by the guard, with the consequence that at the end of the month when I drew off my balance sheet and made my averages per capita I made every prisoner consume six pounds each of beef, four pounds each of mutton, and five pounds each of pork daily! Thus each prisoner consumed, according to the weights of the meats returned by the guard, FIFTEEN POUNDS OF MEAT DAILY, besides enormous quantities of vegetables, butter, etc., from which the tare weight of course had not been deducted. When my monthly statement was examined by the Board of Managers at their meeting there was the utmost astonishment, and Supt. Munshower was sent for to the board's room and asked to explain. I supplied him with the guards slips, when, when totalized, exactly figured out my per capita averages. Light finally penetrated the craniums of James and his board, and the guards at either end of the line were withdrawn and ignominiously assigned to duty on the wall, while the steward, Munshower and myself held an experience and pleasant, soulful meeting in the office of the kitchen.

[To be continued.]

## Lincoln and the "Sweat Box."

The hardships endured by sailors even now are sufficient, were they more generally known, to deter adventurous boys from running away to sea. The isolation of a vessel at sea, and the responsibility of the captain for the safety of all on board, of course make it necessary that passengers and crew shall be entirely subject to his commands. Despotism is unavoidable, and where authority is so absolute it is natural that abuses should exist. But the hardships and cruelties to which the modern sailor is subjected are as nothing to those which formed the common lot of his prede-

cessors, either in the navy or the merchant service. The story of the disappearance of one such cruelty from the United States navy at the command of Abraham Lincoln is worth telling.

On one of Mr. Lincoln's excursions to Fortress Monroe, on the Steamer Hartford, in 1863, his attention was directed to a narrow door, bound with iron, the use of which he was anxious to learn.

"What is this?" he asked.

"Oh, that is the 'sweat-box,'" was the reply. "It is used for refractory and insubordinate seamen. A man in there is subjected to steam heat, and has very little ventilation. It generally brings him to terms very quickly."

President Lincoln's curiosity was aroused. "This," he said to himself, "is treatment to which thousands of American seamen are probably subjected every year. Let me try it for myself and see what it really is."

Taking off his hat—for he was several inches over six feet in height—he entered the enclosure, which he found to be little more than three feet in length or width. He gave orders that at a signal from himself the doors should be immediately opened. It was then closed and the steam turned on.

He had been inside hardly three minutes before the signal was given. President Lincoln had experienced enough of what was then regarded as necessary punishment for American seamen. There was very little ventilation and the short exposure to the hot and humid air had almost suffocated him.

Turning to Secretary Wells, of the Navy Department, ordered that no such enclosure as the sweat box should ever be allowed on any vessel flying the American flag.

It was not an hour after this order had been given before every sailor on every ship in Hampton Roads had heard of it. The effect was most remarkable on the older sailors, many of whom had themselves experienced the punishment of the sweat-box. Some of them wept from joy.

But the good results of this act of President Lincoln were not confined to the American navy. Great Britain, France, Germany and other European countries heard that the sweat-box had been abolished in America as inhuman. One and all of these nations in turn fell into line, and to-day the sweat-box is not to be found on any vessel flying the flag of a civilized nation throughout the world.

## Camps for Consumptives.

Camps for consumptives will soon be a feature of hospital work near Boston. The project will be started with one camp, and additions will be made from time to time. Ten box tents will be arranged in a circle around an open air fire, and surrounding them will be a wall of duck eight feet in height. The patients will have an opportunity to test the value of fresh air, for the tents will receive no other heat than that obtained from the open fire, and for the coldest weather extra heat must be secured by means of sleeping boots, hot water jugs and felt blankets.

Everett Wreast: "I read in de paper de cake was wrapped in dat one of dese scientific blokes had gone crazy studyin' on perpetual motion." Tatterton: "Ort to be crazy! A man wot 'll allow his intellect ter run ter sech disgustin' subjects as perpetual motion ain't in his right mind no time."

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